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Mr. Nixon Goofs

It's been a bad week for Richard Nixon, usually a careful man.

First, in a new book he accused Mr. Kennedy, as a candidate in 1960, of breaking faith on the Cuban invasion plans. Mr. Nixon wrote that his opponent, despite the fact that he had been confidentially briefed by Allen Dulles, then CIA director, attacked the Eisenhower administration for failing to support anti-Castro Cubans. This, Mr. Nixon said, forced him to denounce the Kennedy suggestion that we aid these Cubans, although he, Mr. Nixon, favored such aid, in order to protect the secrecy of the operation.

The Nixon story was promptly denied by the White House, and also by Mr. Dulles. The latter said he had not briefed Mr. Kennedy on the invasion project and that there evidently had been a misunderstanding.

Mr. Nixon, at this point, would have been well advised to concede error. Instead, he has issued an ambiguous statement which defends his book and which can be interpreted as saying that both the White House denial and Mr. Dulles were mistaken. We think the former Vice President has goofed on both counts. In his original accusation and in his subsequent clarifying statement which clarifies nothing.